

Just the Facts: House Republicans' Record of Obstruction

As we approach the end of the 113th Congress, the most-closed, least-productive Congress in modern history, here's a look at House Republicans' long record of obstruction and partisanship. From jobs and the economy to fiscal responsibility, House Republicans have obstructed progress on issue after issue, walking away from the American people on priorities that matter most.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS PROMISED TO ALLOW THE HOUSE TO WORK ITS WILL WHEN THEY TOOK THE MAJORITY

House Republicans campaigned on the promise that they would take action on issues that voters care about and allow the House to work its will:

Speaker Boehner: "Above all else, we will welcome the battle of ideas, encourage it, and engage in it – openly, honestly, and respectfully. As the chamber closest to the people, the House works best when it is allowed to work its will. I ask all members of this body to join me in recognizing this common truth." [Floor Remarks, [1/5/11](#)]

Former Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, and Budget Chairman Paul Ryan: "We pledge to stand on principle, to lead as adults, and – most of all – to serve as responsible stewards of the public trust by listening to the American people." [*Young Guns*, 9/14/10]

BUT HOUSE REPUBLICANS PUT POLITICS FIRST

Those promises were short-lived, and the American people have witnessed nothing but obstruction from House Republicans since they took the majority as they've consistently put political messaging ahead of real solutions:

Pete Sessions: "Everything we do in this body should be about messaging to win back the Senate." [Roll Call, [11/5/2013](#)]

HOUSE REPUBLICANS WALK AWAY FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Rather than allow the House to work its will and find solutions to real challenges facing the American people, House Republicans have demonstrated a pattern of obstruction and partisanship. Whether it's giving up on critical negotiations, pulling their own legislation due to internal divisions, or tacking further to the right when they couldn't pass their bills instead of compromising in the middle, House Republicans have walked away from the American people and told them "you're on your own" throughout the 112th and 113th Congresses:

REPUBLICANS WALK AWAY FROM JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

- Republicans walked away from a bipartisan Senate compromise, placing the payroll tax cut and unemployment insurance at risk. [12/20/11]
- 91 Republicans walked away from the measure to extend the payroll tax cut and unemployment insurance, and GOP leadership relied on 147 Democrats to pass it. [2/17/12]
- Republicans walked away from the bipartisan Senate highway bill, which passed the Senate with 74 votes. [February-June 2012]
- Republicans introduced their budget, which walked away from the Budget Control Act spending levels they agreed to in August 2011 [March 20, 2012]
- 93 Republicans walked away from reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank, and GOP leadership relied on 183 Democrats to pass the bill. [5/9/12]

- 52 Republicans walked away from a conference report to provide long-term highway funding, and GOP leadership relied on 187 Democrats to pass it. [6/29/12]
- Republicans walked away from American workers by allowing part of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, which provides critical job training and worker assistance, to expire. [12/31/13]
- Republicans walked away from 1.3 million Americans by blocking consideration of legislation to renew emergency unemployment insurance, which expired on December 28. [1/9/14]
- Republicans walked away from extending emergency unemployment assistance for people who lost their jobs on or before April 1, 2014. [1/15/14]
- Republicans walked away from extending emergency unemployment assistance for people who lost their jobs on or before July 1, 2014. [1/28/14]
- Republicans walked away from the Fair Minimum Wage Act, which increases the federal minimum wage for employees to \$10.10 an hour. [2/26/14, 2/27/14, 4/2/14, 4/4/14, 4/29/14, 7/30/14]
- Republicans walked away from extending emergency unemployment assistance for people who lost their jobs on or before January 1, 2015. [3/5/14, 3/6/14]
- Republicans walked away from extending emergency unemployment assistance for people who lost their jobs on or before June 1, 2014. The measure Republicans voted against was identical to a bill that passed the Senate with bipartisan support. [4/8/14, 5/7/14]

REPUBLICANS WALK AWAY FROM FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Republicans walked away from the Bowles-Simpson Bipartisan Fiscal Commission. [12/3/10]
- 54 Republicans walked away from a Continuing Resolution that would keep the government funded for three weeks, and GOP leadership relied on 85 Democrats to pass the bill. [3/15/11]
- 59 Republicans walked away from a Continuing Resolution that would keep the government funded for the year, and GOP leadership relied on 81 Democrats to pass the bill. [4/14/11]
- Majority Leader Cantor walked away from the Biden deficit reduction talks. [6/23/11]
- Speaker Boehner walked away from deficit reduction negotiations with President Obama. [7/22/11]
- 66 Republicans walked away from a bill that would have ensured our nation paid its bills, and GOP leadership relied on 95 Democrats in order to avoid default and ensure America would meet its obligations. [8/1/11]
- 101 Republicans walked away from a conference report for the Agriculture, Commerce-Justice-Science, and Transportation-HUD appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2012, and GOP leadership relied on 165 Democrats to pass the bill. [11/17/11]
- Republicans walked away from the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. [11/21/11]
- 86 Republicans walked away from the omnibus for the remaining nine appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2012, and GOP leadership relied on 149 Democrats to pass the bill. [12/16/11]
- 151 Republicans walked away from preventing the fiscal cliff, and GOP leadership relied on 172 Democrats to pass the bill. [1/1/13]
- Republicans walked away from the American people and refused to work with House Democrats to replace the sequester, allowing arbitrary, across-the-board spending cuts to go into effect. [2/1/13]
- 221 Republicans walked away from meeting our nation's debt obligations by passing H.R. 807, the Pay China First Bill, placing America closer to the risk of default. [5/9/13]
- 144 Republicans walked away from ending the government shutdown, and GOP leadership relied on 198 Democrats to end it, which cost the economy \$24 billion. [10/16/13]

REPUBLICANS WALK AWAY FROM WOMEN

- 138 Republicans walked away from reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, and GOP leadership relied on all 199 House Democrats to pass the legislation. [2/28/13]

- Republicans walked away from working women by voting against the Paycheck Fairness Act, which ensures equal pay for equal work by prohibiting sex discrimination in the payment of wages. [4/8/14, 7/30/14]

REPUBLICANS WALK AWAY FROM STUDENTS

- 52 Republicans walked away from a conference report to prevent student loan interest rates from doubling, and GOP leadership relied on 187 Democrats to pass it. [6/29/12]
- Republicans walked away from America's students and allowed student loan interest rates to double. [7/1/13]

REPUBLICANS WALK AWAY FROM COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

- After the Senate passed a bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill by a strong vote of 68-32, Republicans walked away from the majority of Americans who support comprehensive reform by refusing to bring it to the Floor. They also walked away from the bipartisan House bill, H.R. 15, four times. [3/26/14, 7/31/14, twice on 8/1/14]
- House Republican leadership walked away from one of their own members by telling Republican Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, responsible for crafting the House Republican version of immigration reform, that they wouldn't be bringing his bill to the Floor for a vote. [7/10/14]
- House Republican leaders, facing a conservative revolt, were forced to pull their border crisis funding bill and tack further to the right – passing a partisan bill that went nowhere in the Senate and failed to provide the necessary resources to address the humanitarian crisis at the border. [7/31/14]

REPUBLICANS WALK AWAY FROM AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

- Republicans walked away from access to affordable health care for the 53rd time by voting to undermine or repeal the Affordable Care Act and offering no alternative legislation to replace it – despite their campaign pledge to repeal and replace. [9/11/14]

REPUBLICANS WALK AWAY FROM DISASTER RELIEF

- In the days immediately after Hurricane Sandy, 69 Republicans walked away from extending the National Flood Insurance program as families and businesses were actively assessing storm damage and making claims, and GOP leadership relied on 193 Democrats to keep the program operating. [1/4/13]
- House Republican leadership refused to bring the Sandy supplemental aid bill to the Floor after the Senate passed it with strong bipartisan support. When a bill was brought to the Floor, 179 Republicans walked away from businesses and families affected by Hurricane Sandy, and GOP leadership relied on 192 Democrats to pass the bill. [1/15/13]

REPUBLICANS WALK AWAY FROM THE FARM COMMUNITY

- Republicans walked away from America's farm communities by failing to pass a farm bill after they added harmful, partisan amendments to the original bill that would make drastic cuts to critical nutrition programs and after they failed to secure the votes needed for final passage from 62 of their own members. [6/18/13]

MEANWHILE, HOUSE REPUBLICANS IGNORE LEGISLATION THAT AMERICANS SUPPORT...

Whether wasting time on political messaging bills or walking away from critical negotiations, House Republicans continue to ignore important legislation that enjoys the support of the majority of Americans, such as:

- Make It In America jobs legislation – By 20 percentage points, voters rate the economy and jobs the single most important issue. [Washington Post poll, [9/9/14](#)]

Office of Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer, 9/11/14

- Fair Minimum Wage Act – “Seventy-one percent of people surveyed favor a hike in the federal minimum wage,” including 54% of Republicans. [CNN Money, [6/9/14](#)]
- Paycheck Fairness Act – 74% of Americans support “government efforts to address male-female income disparity in the United States.” [Politico, [5/2014](#)]
- Comprehensive Immigration Reform – Over 70% of Americans – including 64% of Republicans – support comprehensive immigration reform. [Politico, [5/19/14](#)]

...AND WASTE TIME AND TAXPAYER DOLLARS ON POLITICAL MESSAGING

In addition to ignoring the priorities of the American people, House Republicans’ obstruction and partisanship has wasted billions in taxpayer dollars and harmed our economy:

- The Republican government shutdown cost our economy \$24 billion. [CNN, [10/17/13](#)]
- Republicans’ refusal to meet our nation’s debt obligations cost our economy \$1.3 billion. [Huffington Post, [9/22/12](#)]
- Over 50 votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act have cost taxpayers \$79 million. [CBS News, [7/11/12](#)]
- Setting up the Benghazi Select Committee, to look at a tragedy that has been thoroughly investigated, will cost taxpayers \$3.3 million. [USA Today, [7/7/14](#)]
- Over \$2.3 million in taxpayer dollars was spent on an unsuccessful court battle to defend the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act. [Bloomberg, [6/26/13](#)]
- House Republicans have signed a no-bid contract to spend \$350,000 on their political lawsuit against President Obama. [Washington Post, [8/25/14](#)]

SENATE REPUBLICANS CONTINUE TO OBSTRUCT IN THE SENATE

Republican obstruction isn’t limited to the House. Senate Republicans have blocked debate on bill after bill, including:

- Paycheck Fairness Act, which would help close the gender gap in wages and ensure equal pay for equal work [4/9/14]
- Fair Minimum Wage Act, which would raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour [4/30/2014]
- Bring Jobs Home Act, which would stop giving tax breaks to companies that ship American jobs overseas and provide a new tax credit to businesses that bring outsourced jobs back to the United States. [7/30/14]
- Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act, which would help Americans increase savings on their energy bills and create 200,000 American jobs. [5/12/14]
- The Bank On Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act, which would help decrease the burden of student loans for 25 million students. [6/11/2014]

SENATE REPUBLICANS PROMISE TO CONTINUE THEIR RECORD OF OBSTRUCTION

Senate Republicans intend to continue their record of obstruction and partisanship in the next Congress, already threatening another Republican-led shut down:

“Mitch McConnell has a game plan to confront President Barack Obama with a stark choice next year: Accept bills reining in the administration’s policies or veto them and risk a government shutdown... ‘We’re going to pass spending bills, and they’re going to have a lot of restrictions on the activities of the bureaucracy,’ McConnell said in an interview aboard his campaign bus traveling through Western Kentucky coal country. ‘That’s something he won’t like, but that will be done. I guarantee it.’” [Politico, [8/20/14](#)]

HOUSE DEMOCRATS HAVE CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED WILLINGNESS TO WORK ACROSS THE AISLE

Throughout this Congress, the House Republican leadership has relied on Democrats to pass nearly every major bill. For example:

- **85 Democrats voted for a measure to keep the government funded for three weeks** while 54 Republicans voted against it [3/15/11]
- **81 Democrats voted for a measure to keep the government funded for the year** while 59 Republicans voted against it [4/14/11]
- **95 Democrats voted for the Budget Control Act** while 66 Republicans voted against it [8/1/11]
- **165 Democrats voted for the conference report for Agriculture, Commerce-Justice-Science, and Transportation-HUD appropriations bills** while 101 Republicans voted against it [11/17/11]
- **149 Democrats voted for the omnibus appropriations bill for fiscal year 2012** while 86 Republicans voted against it [12/16/11]
- **147 Democrats voted to extend the payroll tax cut and unemployment insurance** while 91 Republicans voted against it [2/17/12]
- **183 Democrats voted to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank** while 93 Republicans voted against it [5/9/12]
- **187 Democrats voted for highway, student loan relief, and flood extension** while 52 Republicans voted against it [6/29/12]
- **172 Democrats voted for the fiscal cliff deal** while 151 Republicans voted against it [1/1/13]
- **190 Democrats voted to add funds to Sandy relief package to fully meet the financial needs of the affected states** while 190 Republicans voted against it [1/15/13]
- **192 Democrats voted for the final Sandy relief package** while 179 Republicans voted against it [1/15/13]
- **199 Democrats voted for VAWA** while 138 Republicans voted against it [2/28/13]
- **198 Democrats voted to reopen the government** while 144 Republicans voted against it [10/16/13]
- **81 Democrats voted for patent reform** while 33 Republicans voted against it [12/5/13]
- **89 Democrats voted for the Farm Bill conference report**, while 63 Republicans voted against it [1/29/14]

As we look back on this record of obstruction and partisanship, it is clear that House Republicans haven't lived up to their pledges to do the people's work and allow the House to work its will. Meanwhile, House Democrats have consistently demonstrated that we are willing to work together to ensure government works for the American people and take actions that provide real solutions to the challenges facing our nation.